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Magic Ford Touch May Undo the CIA

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Senator Frank Church says either Mr. Richardson lent he's afraid that the choice of his appearance of New England partisan like George Bush to land rectitude to Mr. Nixon in head the CIA will undermine every way he possibly could, the professional spirit of that before saving his own skin at agency. Odd, isn't it? Mr. the last minute.

Church (D., Idaho) has been But what about George pretending to fight that spirit Bush? His brief service as chairman in his intelligence hearings national chairman during Watergate involved nothing near it. That tends to confirm the lie as compromising as Mr. Richardson's aborted efforts to general opinion in Washington that, between the two intelligence hearings going on, Senator

Church's committee has done was Mr. Bush's service the staff but not the will and as United Nations ambassador of the committee of Representatives during the time of Mr. Nixon's opening to China.

has the will but not the staff. The right wing was never

Mr. Church went on to say on soldier ground than in that he had no objection to a charging that Mr. Nixon being a good Republican in the CIA trayed a thousand promises to post, just so long as he has not Taiwan, to Chiang Kai-shek been a national chairman for and to the old China lobby of his party—and he gave Elliot Mr. Nixon's earlier career. To L. Richardson's name as an deflate this charge Mr. Nixon example of such a good Republican. That's pretty odd, against Taiwan's expulsion too—Senator Church obviously agrees with Richard Nixon on the definition of a of Mr. Nixon's own action; but Nixon is a good Republican.

Mr. Bush pretended with great energy that nothing was of the Watergate scandal like further from Mr. Nixon's a white knight. But those of us who had seen him run errands for Mr. Nixon in Cabinet post keep his reputation among after Cabinet post wondered, sharp observers. He was not even then, whether his reputation was earned. Mr. Nixon did not choose his attorney general lightly, in that period of turmoil. Now we can read, in the special prosecutor's final report, that Mr. Richardson tried to hem in Archibald Cox, and only when Mr. Cox stood firm did Mr. Richardson realize he would have to fall honorably with Mr. Cox or he would fall farther down, and dishonorably, with Mr. Nixon himself.

That is not much of a recommendation for the CIA post—or for any other post,

there to block the ouster or to help Chiang Kai-shek. He was sent on a diversionary errand to block some of the right wing's early criticism of detente.

The ploy worked as well as could be expected. When Mr. Bush, mission accomplished, was moved from the U.N. to the national committee, William F. Buckley (the educated man's Howard Cosell), wrote: "It crossed the mind fleetingly that Bush was being punished, rather belatedly in the last weeks of 1972, for having failed to achieve the desired result in the General Assembly in the fall of 1971 on the China debate."

Mr. Buckley rejected the fleeting thought, but on irrelevant grounds; he never hints to his readers that Mr. Bush accomplished exactly the desired result—which was to blunt in some measure the protests of men like Mr. Buckley, who could swallow the Bush effort as a sincere one.

It is true that Mr. Bush has no claim to nonpartisan professionalism—and that is why I hope he gets confirmed as head of the CIA. The CIA's

ethos of gentlemen free-lancers needs to be undermined, and a shabby appointment will help along that effort.

Representative Michael J. Harrington told me, when we discussed the Church and Pike committees: "They cannot bring down the CIA. Those guys will have to bring themselves down." Perhaps President Ford, without knowing it, has begun that process with his nomination of Mr. Bush for director.